

[Dec. 6, 1869.]

quirements of every living thing; with a population of forty millions of free people, all speaking one language; with facilities for every mortal to acquire an education; with institutions closing to none the avenues to fame or any blessing of fortune that may be coveted; with freedom of the pulpit, the press, and the school; with a revenue flowing into the national treasury beyond the requirements of the government. Happily, harmony is being rapidly restored within our own borders. Manufactures hitherto unknown in our country are springing up in all sections, producing a degree of national independence unequaled by that of any other power.

These blessings and countless others are intrusted to your care and mine for safe-keeping, for the brief period of our tenure of office. In a short time we must, each of us, return to the ranks of the people who have conferred upon us our honors, and account to them for our stewardship. I earnestly desire that neither you nor I may be condemned by a free and enlightened constituency, nor by our own consciences.

Emerging from a rebellion of gigantic magnitude, aided as it was by the sympathies and assistance of nations with which we were at peace, eleven States of the Union were, four years ago, left without legal State governments. A national debt had been contracted; American commerce was almost driven from the seas; the industry of one-half of the country had been taken from the control of the capitalist and placed where all labor rightfully belongs—in the keeping of the laborer. The work of restoring State governments loyal to the Union, of protecting and fostering free labor, and providing means for paying the interest on the public debt, has received ample attention from Congress. Although your efforts have not met with the success in all particulars that might have been desired, yet, on the whole, they have been more successful than could have been reasonably anticipated.

Seven States which passed ordinances of secession have been fully restored to their places in the Union. The eighth, Georgia, held an election at which she ratified her constitution, republican in form, elected a governor, members of Congress, a State legislature, and all other officers required. The governor was duly installed, and the legislature met and performed all the acts then required of them by the reconstruction acts of Congress. Subsequently, however, in violation of the constitution which they had just ratified, (as since decided by the supreme court of the State,) they unseated the colored members of the legislature and admitted to seats some members who are disqualified by the third clause of the fourteenth amendment to the Constitution, an article which they themselves had contributed to ratify. Under these circumstances, I would submit to you whether it would not be wise, without delay, to enact a law authorizing the governor of Georgia to convene the mem-

bers originally elected to the legislature, requiring each member to take the oath prescribed by the reconstruction acts, and none to be admitted who are ineligible under the third clause of the fourteenth amendment.

The freedmen, under the protection which they have received, are making rapid progress in learning, and no complaints are heard of lack of industry on their part where they receive fair remuneration for their labor. The means provided for paying the interest on the public debt, with all other expenses of government, are more than ample. The loss of our commerce is the only result of the late rebellion which has not received sufficient attention from you. To this subject I call your earnest attention. I will not now suggest plans by which this object may be effected, but will, if necessary, make it the subject of a special message during the session of Congress.